Maubikeck, the Lion-Tamer.

By SEWARD W. HOPKINS,

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CHAPTER VIII.

My reflections, as the long hours dragged themselves along toward morning, were anything but refreshing.

The dominant thought, of course, was that I had got myself in a bad scrape and would probably lose my life. For one moment the thought did come to me: "There is the United States minister." I dismissed the idea as holding out no hope. I had no means of communicating with our representative. In fact, I was entirely cut off from all communication with the world. My friends would probably never know what became of me. My only hope was Mutterelli. And where, through all of this, was Mutterelli?

Calling to my assistance all the nerve I possessed, I resolved to put on as good a face in the matter as possible, and not allow the prefetto or his guards to see any signs of weakness in my demeanor.

The room in which I was held was well lighted by a large lamp which hung from the ceiling. I drew a chair under the lamp, and with the same nonchalance which would have characterized me had I been in my favorite corner at the Lotus Club with the major and Dilkins around me instead of the black-looking Sardinians, I pulled from my pocket and began to read the paper I had taken from the table in Pacho Maligni's room. It read as follows:

"New York City, in the Stat New York, in the United Stats of America, May 16, 18—.

"To the person who, when I am dead, shall obtain this paper, I salute. It is that I am at every day in the great danger of being killed by an accident of my profeshun that I leave in this form the story of Nita Barlotti, that perhaps in some long day to become she may be restor to those where she belong and who haf lost her. And I, who am known to the world as Barlotti the Trapeze King, pray to that person who reads these words to do what he can and what I cannot to the good end that Nita Barlotti may know who she really is, and may come into her own if she is, as I belief, the daughter of a rich person.

"It wil be a surprise to the person who find this to know that my name it is not Barlotti, but Sigmctta. Yes, I am Antonio Sigmotta, and Barlotti is the name I haf take in the circus to please my brother, who was very rich and a physician in New York.

"When I came this country I was poor—very poor. I went to my brother, and he was angry to me in words, but he did some kindness to me that he let me live in his house till I haf money to keep myself. I make contract with Maligni to go in the circus as trapeze actor, and my brother mak me change my name, so not to disgrace him.

"One day I went into my brother's private room for something. It was a workshop—he call laboratoria or some like that. It was at the night, and was very dark. My brother was in his bedroom.

"I lighted the gas in the laboratoria, and found what I was looking for—some medicine he gave me when I had the aching of the head.

"As I was about to turn back the gas to go out, I saw a bundle on the floor. It seemed to me that it move. Then I stood still, and I hear a little cry like a child. I rush to the door. I listen for my brother, but he not to be heard. I open the bundle. It was a sack, with strings in the end. It had in it a little child—a girl. I drew it out. The child breath and moan, but do not seem to know, and then I know my brother had given it a drug.

"Then I hurry, trembling much, and I took some cloths and other things and I make a rag baby just the size of the child I took from the sack. I put the rag baby in the sack and made it tight like it was before I opened it. Then I quick carry the live child to my room and hide it in my bed. Then I watch. Pretty soon my brother come and go to the laboratoria. I keep quiet so he do not hear me, and follow him. He take the sack and my rag baby and steal from his own house like he was a thief, and I know he was worse. Still, I folow him.

"My brother went into a dark street and went to the docks on the East river. I saw him take a stone and tie a cord to it and around the sack. Then he throw all into the water. When he saw it sink he turn round and sneak home.

"I had in New York, near my brother's house, a sweetheart. I met her at a concert hall, and I often went to see her at her house. She was a great singer, and I love her, so I want to marry her. She was a good girl and her name was Nita.

"Late in the night I took the child, and when my brother was asleep I stole from his house and carried the child to Nita. I told her all about my brother, and she promised not to say one word, for I knew my brother would kill me if he knew. I was then intend to find out who the child was, and if she had parents who love her, give her back. But I must go with Maligni in the circus, and I leave the little girl with Nita till I come home. When I come home my brother Charles was gone, and I never saw him again. Nita was married to me and she called the little girl Nita after herself. For a few year my wife Nita and little Nita travel with me in the circus, but my wife Nita take sick and die. Then I haf little Nita put in a big school in Albany, and she is there now.

"I haf a pin and a locket and a chain wich little Nita wore, wich I haf kept. They will be in the box with this letter. On the pin is the name Alice. The locket haf a picture of a beautiful lady. I took this picture out and put a little slip of paper under it with the date on it when I found the child.

"This is all I know. I love little Nita like she was my own. My brother's name is Charles Sigmotta, but I do not know where he is. Little Nita is at Madame De Long's school in Albany, in the Stat of New York.

"I swear by all the holy saints that what I haf written is true.

"ANTONIO SIGMOTTA."

Here, indeed, was a valuable document. My exultation was so great that I seemed to have Ralph Graviscourt completely routed, and Edith Broughton's sweet face seemed to smile encouragingly at me from way across the sea. But after a few minutes of supreme gratification, the thought flashed over me that the statement of Antonio Sigmotta, otherwise known as Barlotti, did not in any way connect Ralph Graviscourt with the case. Of course, the photograph, the pin with the name Alice engraved upon it and Nita Barlotti's striking resemblance to the wife of Charles Graviscourt, were to my mind conclusive evidence, but would the evidence hold in law? I knew it would not.

I took the locket from my pocket, removed the picture and found a slip of white paper bearing a date. I examined this, and my heart throbbed with excitement when I saw that the date of Doctor Sigmotta's attempted murder of Nita Barlotti was the same as that inscribed upon the tombstone in Trinity cemetery, New York, as the date of little Alice Graviscourt's death. I carefully replaced the paper and the picture, and with wild dreams of what might occur if I ever escaped from the clutches of the prefetto, I passed the remainder of the night half sleeping on a broad, low couch that stood in one corner of the guard room.

In the morning I was served with a substantial breakfast and soon after I had disposed of it I was conducted before the prefetto. The elder Maligni looked at me with a venomous glance, and I saw in the faces of the crowd of men around him not one glance of friendliness.

Among the spectators was a rascally-looking fellow who was called by the prefetto "Pordino," and as he seemed to have the friendship of the powerful Maligni, I at once identified him as the Count di Pordino, the uncle of Henry Thorlans, spoken of by Mutterelli.

Nita was not brought into the room during the trial, and did not seem to be an important factor. There was not a friendly voice raised in my behalf. I made an attempt to speak, but was ordered to be quiet.

When the testimony was all in, the prefetto turned to me, and said:

"Young man, I have listened to the evidence against you, and I find that you are guilty of the murder of my brother. From to-day, you are the same as dead. The sentence which I shall impose upon you is that you be put in the Cagliari prison and work for the state during the remainder of your life. That is all I have to say to you."

"But!" I cried, springing to my feet, "I am not guilty. I swear to you, prefetto, that I do not know who killed your brother! I had no cause to hate him or to wish him dead! But others had! An attempt at his life was made in New York. I saw it, but I had nothing to do with it. Your brother had enemies who have tracked him here. I——"

"Enough! You were seen yesterday in company with another, examining my villa and grounds. At night my brother is murdered and you are found on my property, carrying off my brother's promised wife. It is enough."

Then turning to the guard, he uttered a command, and I was conducted from this hall of justice to my prison.

As I entered the great iron gates of the prison yard, and heard them clang behind me, I felt the deepest despair.

My clothes were taken from me, and I was clad in the bi-colored prison suits with which Sardinia clothes its prisoners.

These suits are made of stuff very similar to that in use for the same purpose in the United States, but the colors, instead of running in stripes, are divided in the middle. One-half measuring from a line drawn from the nose downward, is dark and the other light. When I had been thus clothed I had one arm, leg and the right side of my body black, and the left arm, leg and half of my body a dirty gray.

My watch, the gold locket and pin that I had taken from Maligni were taken from me, but the letter of Antonio Sigmotta was returned to me with a shrug of the keeper's shoulders, as if to say that if the possession of a piece of paper would make me any happier, I might have it, for all he cared to the contrary.

This done, I was conducted with scant ceremony to a dungeon cell.

My cell was perhaps twenty feet square, high up in the tower, and overlooked the north.

The floor was of stone, and the walls of some kind of cement. The furniture consisted of an iron bedstead, an old chair, and a small tble. The light came through a small grated window which was above my head.

For a time, after I reached my cell, I was greatly worked up, the excitement of the day and of the previous night having a trying effect on my nerves. But as the hours wore on, the fct that I had slept little began to tell on me, and I grew drowsy. Sitting on my hard chair I gave myself up to my bitter reflections, and finally my head drooped, and, overcome by the drowsiness which was increased by the silence of my cell, I fell asleep, and my waking meditations became merged in a dream, in which I renewed acquaintance with Major Simmons and Dilkins, and saw their faces, and the face of Edith Broughton, and the faces of other friends peering at me, some in pity, some in alarm, some with love. And most strongly outlined among them all was the calm, stern face of my dead hero, Maubikeck. Taere was an inspiration in that face as, half sleeping, I saw it looking down at me. It bade me rouse myself. It shone like a beacon before me, leading me to a resolution that I would never have reached but for this fantastic appearance. It brought to my mind the heroism of Maubikeck, by whose death I was given life. The manliness of his nature seemed imparted to mine. I recollected that Nita Barlotti, the girl whom I had sworn to save, was still in the hands of men whose purposes were not always good. My own love for Edith Broughton welled up within me, and surged through my heart as it had never done before. Perhaps an hour passed and I awoke. My dream was ended. I awoke from it a new man.

I arose from my chair and walked around my cell. Near the window I paused. I saw some words carved in the cement wall. They were in shadow, and it required some minutes of effort before I could decipher them. Shading my eyes from the light which came through the grated window, I gazed steadily at the letters until, accustomed to the dim light which fell upon them, I made them out.

On one line carved in bold letters, was the name, "Henry Thorlane." And under it, in smaller but not less distinct characters, were the words, "I will avenge."

I was in the cell occupied once by the son of the Englishman about whom Mutterelli had told me, and who was now, according to Mutterelli, in the monastery of The Saints.

The first thing to be done was to learn as much as possible of my surroundings. This was an easy matter so far as the cell was concerned. I knew every inch of it already.

But there was the window.

I dragged the table across the stone floor and climbed upon it. It put me just high enough to enable me to look out through the strong bars of the little window.

Looking down, I saw that the prison yard extended about forty feet from the prison walls, and was surrounded by a stone wall, surmounted by sharpened spikes, over which it would be impossible to climb.

I was getting hungry, and knew that it must be noon. I supposed they fed prisoners in Sardinia, and waited patiently for my portion.

Dinner time came at last, and I was agreeably surprised to receive at the hands of my keeper a substantial meal. Doing justice to this, I felt like a new man, ready for any emergency and willing to take my chance for liberty. But I must, I reasoned, bide my time and wait for a promising opportunity.

During the long night I lay on my prison bed, sleeping part of the time, but having wakeful hours, in which I pondered and studied over the great problem of my life—how to escape and carry the plans, now seemingly ended in disaster, to a successful termination.

And one day followed another in this wise, and night followed night, until I had spent a week in the prison. I had heard nothing from Mutterelli, and gave him up.

(To be continued.)

THE GREEN APPLE PIE.

Will Bring Back to Every Man His Boyish Days.

Once a year at least the most confirmed pie hater will eat a piece of the sweet he condemns. And that is when the first new green apples come to town. Hardly does he like to partake of them raw, for he cannot while doing so keep his mind off the funny man's paragraphs which have boys and that fruit mixed up to form a plot. But after dinner if there is before him a piece of pie, less than an hour's distance from the oven, its crust flaky and desirably brown, its inner contents of juicy, tender, new green apples, sweetened wisely and flavored with a suspicion of nutmeg, he forgets everything for the moment but just that pie. He forgets everything so far, indeed, as to accept another piece if it is urged upon him, especially if there accompanies it some rich yellow clotted cream. Apple pie and cheese may be traditional, but green apple pies in midsummer with cream to enhance their value are delicious treasures of the present.—Boston Transcript.

Osculatory Memorandum.

Lives there man in Baltimore with soul so dead that he could resist the soft embrace of a gentle maiden's arms and fight away the nectar of her ruby lips? Not if we know it, and the age question doesn't enter into the problem.—Daily World, Baltimore, Md.

Mothers Honor Roosevelt.

It is said that more babies have been named ofter President Roosevelt than after any other executive of the nation save Washington and Jefferson.

Talk is cheap, even to those who indulge in extravagant remarks.

LIFE.

Let me but live my life from year to year,
With forward face and unreluctant soul,
Not hastening to, nor turning from, the goal;
Not mourning for the things that disappear
In the dim past, nor holding back in fear
From what the future veils; but with a whole
And happy heart, that pays its toll
To youth and age, and travel on with cheer.

So let the way wind up the hill or down,
Through rough or smooth, the journey will be joy;
Still seeking what I sought when but a boy,
New friendship, high adventure and a crown,
I shall grow old, but never lose life's zest,
Because the road's last turn will be the best.

—Henry Van Dyke.

Reddy's Fake.

BY W. CALVER MOORE.

Reddy was not popular. A little wizened, sour-looking runt, who could not shoot and could not or else would not drink, had but a poor chance of being well received in a Western boom town. He had come over the trail from Laramie a few weeks before, "looking for a likely ranch," and that was about all that was known of his past history, but in those days a man seldom brought a reputation with him; he generally acquired it during his stay in any particular place. His fiery head and florid features and little brown eyes made him the butt of some not very friendly or gentle chafing. He was sworn at, pushed around, almost walked over, but no one could draw him into a fight. These things were all against him, But Reddy had one redeeming feature, he was a gambler, and what pleased better, an unlucky one. When there was a tarantula fight Reddy was sure to bet on the wrong spider; if he sat down to a game of draw, some other player was sure to have a better hand, and Reddy suffered accordingly. He took it all coolly and made a good loser, but the boys did not like him, and so he was a marked man.

Another stranger had come to town; a big rough man, who was ready to drink, gamble or quarrel with any one, and who joined the others in annoying Reddy till it looked as if the little fellow would have shot him if he had dared.

It was pay day and the cowboys were coming in from all the nearby ranches to buy whiskey and gamble; that meant drunken revelry, shooting affrays, and last but not least—races, and the right material for a good race seemed to have come into their midst that morning. Reddy's chief tormenter was the central figure of a group around a mare whose owner had just arrived riding on a mustang and carefully leading her with a lariat.

She was as sleek and nice a little beast as the boys had seen in years. Her owner had stepped into the store for a drink, leaving her tethered to a post. Reddy's tormenter was fondling her and she nosed around him and rubbed against him just as if they were old friends, but it was noticeable that she seemed to be less affectionately inclined toward her other admirers.

"Looks like she might know you," said a short, dark man who was known as Good Graham.

"Know me? Course she does," answered the big fellow, "why I saw this here little girl break the crowd last week over in Big Medicine."

"What?" shouted Good Graham, "Is this the animal you were telling us about yesterday? The one that beat Sharp's big grey for a cold hundred?"

"Yes, and done it neat, too. She's a beaut, boys." Here he lowered his voice so that only those nearest could hear him, "If he lets her run here, you know how to bet your dust."

"What's your expert opinion, Reddy?" asked one.

"What's the "perfesser" got to say about her?" asked another.

"Not much." answered Reddy.

"Can you talk to that?"

"Say, give me a tip, pard. Do you think she can run?" This with mock solemnity from Good Graham.

"Run? That critter? Don't believe she can run worth a cuss."

"Glad you gave me the pointer. See anything around here that can beat her?"

"Yes. I'll take that there hoss of Jones's and beat her down to No. 40 and back, if you can find a jockey for the critter."

The big stranger who had been extolling the virtues of the mare, seemed to lose control of himself with excitement. He pulled a roll of money out of his pocket and shook it in Reddy's face while he shouted:

"What do you think about it now, hey? Can you talk to that?" tapping Reddy squarely on the nose with his money. Reddy appeared to hesitate.

"Give you two to one on the mare," shouted the big fellow. "Now what do you think about her?"

"Guess I'll take a hundred of that," said Reddy, coolly producing a roll of bills that made the other's look small by contrast. The betting was rapid and reckless as soon as it was seen

"I guess I'll cash in."

that Reddy had thrown caution to the winds and was going to give them a chance to win all his money.

The storekeeper was asked to hold the stakes and he had a large amount of money when the bets had all been made. Reddy had staked several hundred dollars, but as he was getting the odds the others were risking twice as much on the speed of the mare. The race was to be held just before sundown so as to allow time for the horses to be fed and watered and put into as fresh a condition as possible.

Good Graham had backed the mare heavily and on account of his light weight had been chosen to ride her. He picked out the lightest saddle he could find among the crowd, took off his heavy boots and even put his belt and revolvers in the hands of the storekeeper.

As five o'clock approached the saloon was deserted and the cowboys collected in a group around the two horses clamoring for the race to begin. Good Graham smiled confidently as he swung himself lightly into the saddle and asked if "Reddy was ready." During the laughter which followed this sally of wit, Reddy fumbled nervously at the saddle girth, tightened his own belt, pulled his hat down over his eyes, and finally crawled into the saddle as if each foot weighed a ton; he looked like a very unlikely jockey. The horses were walked up to the line, a big six-shooter barked—they were off.

The mare seemed to be living up to the reputation the big stranger had given her. The regular rise and fall of her rider was evidence of a clean, long stride, the kind that wins—sometimes Reddy and the mustang thundered beside her until a sudden glimpse of scenery showed that the mare was leading by at least a length.

But something seemed to be wrong; the mare was getting "choppy;" her long stride had given place to a nervous gait which showed painful effort. It was the mustang that was taking things coolly now, and, yes, actually leading. A shout of warning to Good Graham, he rained blows with the squirt on his mount. She put forth her remaining strength in a desperate spurt which gave her the lead for an instant, but Reddy and the mustang shot ahead again and the outcome of the race was no longer a matter of uncertainty.

Reddy dashed over the line a winner by fifty yards, reined up with a jerk and bounded to the ground. He had ridden well, a creditable thing among such men; he had won a great deal of money. He would have been treated like a hero, but all eyes were turned from the victor to the vanquished. The mare had stumbled, throwing her rider and falling on him, and in a cloud of dust Good Graham and his mount could be seen struggling and kicking with equal desperation and frenzy.

The storekeeper, who knew better than to leave his whiskey unguarded, and so had remained standing in the doorway while the race was being run, turned round to get some of the liquor for Graham, when he was suddenly confronted by Reddy, who said in a quiet but determined tone:

"I guess I'll cash in."

"Will you take it now or wait till—"

The rest of the question was cut off sharply at the sight of a big revolver which was drawn from some portion of Reddy's clothing.

"Better listen to the man with the gun; accidents with firearms are mighty frequent," said the big stranger stepping into view. This reinforcement of his enemy from so unexpected a quarter decided the thoroughly frightened storekeeper, who pulled the money from a box and laid it on the end of a barrel.

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The moon was just rising over the tree tops and sending her pale rays through the dusk when three tired mustangs were brought to a halt by their respective riders near a clump of trees on the prairie.

One of them was a big rough-looking man who towered above a little fellow with red hair and face and brown eyes. The third bore a striking resemblance to a certain owner of a certain mare which was led into a certain boom town in Idaho that morning, and was last seen trying to extricate herself from a tangle of loose saddle and fallen rider. The little red-headed one was fingering a bunch of stuff which almost matched the young leaves in color, but seemed to possess some strong attraction for three men, who did not look like botanical students.

"What's the haul, Reddy?"

"About eleven hundred."

"Well, it wasn't a bad day's work, but it was a durn shame to leave Lizzie behind, worth her weight in gold, she was."

"Yes, you could depend on her wind giving out if she run hard about a mile; had to push that mustang for all that was in him though; she was feeling pretty good and came near spoiling the fun. Lucky she took a fall and gave us time to slide; wouldn't want to be around when they find out her tricks."

DIDN'T BUY AN AUTO.

Admiral Evans Took Disinterested Advice of a Cabby.

A story is told of how Admiral (then captain) Evans was cured of his desire for an automobile. He was riding in one of these machines with a friend in New York. After the spin through Central park had become most invigorating the captain became talkative with the chauffeur.

"You are the man I want to talk to," he remarked. "I have been thinking for some time of buying one of these flying machines for myself and I want some expert advice as to what brand of wings to purchase.

"I've driven every kind of machine that there is," returned the affable engineer, "steam, gasoline, electric, and all, and I guess I know 'em all from A to Izzard."

"Well, now, my man" returned the captain, warming up to the gentlemanly steerer, "if you were going to buy a machine for your own self what kind would you select?"

"Well, sir," replied cabby, "if I was to buy one, I'd save up my money and buy a hoss."

The admiral is still without an auto.

Yankee Drummers in Orient.

The experience of two young Americans who recently spent six months traveling through Japan, China and the Philippines for the purpose of soliciting trade affords good evidence that there is much commerce to be secured by Americans if it is properly sought. These young men studied the Chinese language in San Francisco and acquired a sufficient knowledge of it to make themselves understood. They had, therefore, the great advantage of being able to do business directly with their Chinese customers. As it was their first trip to the Orient they did not bring a large variety of samples, but the results have been so encouraging that they propose to return equipped with an enlarged outfit. The method pursued by these young men is worthy the attention of our manufacturers. If two young Americans can learn the language in San Francisco sufficiently to enable them to deal with the Chinese in their own country, others can do the same.

How the Stairs Ran.

Judge Martin J. Keogh of the supreme court, Winchester county, New York, while presiding at the trial of a landlord in failing to keep a certain stairway in proper repair, took occasion to question one of the defendant's witnesses for the purpose of obtaining an accurate description of the location of the stairs. Judge Keogh asked the witness, who in this instance was the janitress of the house:

"Madame, kindly explain to the jury how the stairs run."

The janitress answered, in a loud voice: "Well, yer Honor, whin yer up stairs they run down, and whin yer down stairs they run up."

He Changed His Mind.

"I'm going away,' he said, "to make my fortune.

This seemed to him the romantic thing to do, and he was loaded up with romance.

"In a year," he went on, "I will come back to claim you, but in the meantime you—"

"Yes?" she said inquiringly.

"You will be left to pine alone."

"Oh, no, I won't," she retorted.

"You won't?"

"Not any. Do you think you're the only twig on the tree?"

"You won't be here alone?"

"Well, hardly."

"Then I'll be darned if I'll go."